

Title: Interview with Angela Brown

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Location: Shiloh United Methodist Church

Interviewer(s): Christopher Knorr and Joseph Grenagle

Interviewee: Angela Brown

Introduction: Angela Brown, who moved to Crisfield later in life to be with her husband, Clarence, a lifelong resident of Crisfield, speaks of her experiences, observations, and feelings about Crisfield's past, present, and potential. She is optimistic about the future of Crisfield as long as changes can be made.

[Transcript begins]

Christopher Knorr (Knorr): Okay, so we are here in Shiloh United Methodist Church. It is Saturday the 19th, about 10:40 a.m. My name is Christopher Knorr. I'm one of the interviewers.

Joseph Grenagle (Grenagle): I'm also Joseph Grenagle, interviewer.

Angela Brown (Brown): And I'm Angela Brown, interviewee.

Knorr: Yeah.

Grenagle: Okay, Angela, how long have you lived in the Crisfield area, if you were born here or moved here?

Brown: I've been here 12 years. Yeah. I grew up in Wenona. Same as well.

Grenagle: And what brought you to Crisfield?

Brown: My husband.

Grenagle: How'd you guys meet?

Brown: At a Christmas parade.

Grenagle: Was that here in Crisfield?

Brown: It was here. There's a purple house next to Dollar General and he was sitting on the steps, and it was Christmas parade. Just walked up to him and said, "Hi, my name is the Angela, what's your name?" Anyway, yeah, that we got married.

Knorr: What are some of your more cherished memories in Crisfield?

Brown: There are a lot of good people here, kind of like, especially in the little neighborhood that we live in. Everybody helps each other and looks out for each other. And that's nice. Crab Derby is a lot fun too.

Knorr: Would you say that kind of communal aspect is something that you're proud of in Crisfield?

Brown: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, me and my husband feed a lot of people, too. Like, if we have extra, we take it to everybody, because there's not a whole lot of homeless people around here, but there's quite a few. So we give them blankets and stuff and feed them. And that's a good thing too, makes you feel good about yourself, and you can just stop and help people.

Knorr: How do you entertain yourself in Crisfield? What are some of the things you do to have fun?

Brown: I crochet. That's why I just, I think I've hurt myself. I crochet every day, all day. It's like, I sell my stuff too. It's just what I like to do. And then we go like, we have picnics. We go down to the little beach and sit, take our dog.

Grenagle: Is there, I'm sorry, is there any beach in particular?

Brown: Yes, there's one, you go down towards the American Legion. They have, they own that little beach and they keep it up for everybody to go to. But we found a little one out in the marsh that we can go to private. And it ain't much of a beach, but it's there. We like go there too, especially for picnics cause nobody's around. Yeah, we'd like doing that.

Grenagle: And you partake in, like, fishing or crabbing?

Brown: My husband does. I don't because I don't like to kill stuff. I just- I can't do it.

Knorr: Are there any community events that you regularly attend or like to kind of go to?

Brown: We go to like parades when they have them, Crab Derby, sometimes we go downtown for like, they have all kinds of different festivals through the year. We go to

Janes Island quite a bit too because we like to ride through there. And then, you know, this is probably a total Crisfield holiday and I still ain't figured out what I'm supposed to be doing, but it's called "Organizational Weekend." Yeah, they have a big parade and everything. I don't know what I am supposed to be organizing. I've never figured that out. Nobody can answer that question. It's just a Crisfield thing.

Knorr: What do, when you go to Janes Island, do you just like to walk around or?

Brown: We walk around, we go to the picnic area and Clarence's family, they have a family reunion there. It's not every year, but it's like every two years. So we had one last year, so it won't be one this year. And that's nice because they all get together from everywhere. And these two people started that, my mother-in-law's mother and father, and it's just amazing how things branch out like that. It's cool.

Grenagle: And how would you say, like, storms and flooding has affected your ability to enjoy the outdoors, the beaches of- of Crisfield?

Brown: Well, when the tide's up, we can't get out. It's- we just can't get out. We get encircled by it. It hasn't come inside for a long time, but we're right on the ground, on Somers Cove projects actually, but we're sitting right on the ground. And it, when the tide comes up, we're completely encircled. Nobody can get out or get in, unless you want to ruin your vehicle. Which, but then we all just start barbecuing and stuff, you know. But, if it happens and it's supposed to be all night long, we are up all night long trying to make sure, because we have to put our furniture up if the tide comes- comes in so it don't ruin your furniture. It's just, you get nervous and you're scared all night long, just make sure your stuff ain't getting ruined. It's a pain in the ass. It's, well, you better have boots if you live down here, because the Crisfield tennis shoes is boots. Because the tide can come up just like that on a sunny day, you know. It just depends.

Knorr: When you know that there's going to be maybe a particularly bad storm or like heavy rain, how do you- what do you typically do to prepare for that?

Brown: Well, like I said, we stay up, especially if it's night, because we have blocks that we can put our furniture on so it don't get ruined. Because, you know, if you clean it up real quick, it's not a big problem. But it can ruin all your stuff, so that's what we do to prepare. And we stay home, believe it or not, we don't want to leave because we got three cats and a dog, all boys, my God. But, you know, we worry about them. And we're not leaving without them. What are they going to do if the tide comes in, you know? So we stay home. If- if it got to the point, I guess, where they had come get us over the boat, which they've had to do that in the past, we probably would leave but we'd have to take our animals.

Grenagle: So you said you're a resident of Somers Cove? I believe I've driven past there and I've noticed that a lot of those, or maybe all of those buildings, happen to be like right on-

Brown: Right on the ground.

Grenagle: Right on the ground. Do you think that's kind of, like that it wasn't thought through when they were building those places at the flooding? Or is it or has the flooding just become more of a problem and?

Brown: Yeah, those places, when they built them, you weren't getting tide water like you're getting today. So they are right on the ground, but there- there's one like over by the marina on the family side, that whole street, when people move out, they're not putting people back in because FEMA can't keep paying for everything. You know what I mean? It's a lot of expense. And they keep talking about moving on outside town. None of us want to do that. We want to stay in town. But where it floods, it comes in the house just about every time. They're just not putting new people in there. And it's like a whole row of them, right across from the marina and the road, there's a store, Big Willies, that area right there so.

Grenagle: And do you find your ability or like accessibility to like go into grocery stores and like if you have to go to the pharmacist that's on Main Street, does that, does, does flooding typically interrupt your ability to get to those places?

Brown: It can, but most of the time we know when it's coming, so like we stock up on everything because you never know what's going to happen. So we keep a good stock because we ain't going to starve. And if we know the flood's coming a lot of times the pharmacy will let us get our medicine a couple days early because it does, it floods all in front of that pharmacy. So everybody has just to, everybody I think has just learned how to live around it, you know.

Knorr: Would you say that there's also a good community base where if you need something, like you said, you give out food to some people, but doing like a bad storm, maybe somebody can't get out and they need something. Would you say that Crisfield is generally good at helping each other out in the community?

Brown: Yes. Yes. Everybody's always there willing to help. Well, not everybody, but you know, there's always crazy people anywhere, but most of the time, most all of us do that, you know.

Knorr: Are there any particularly bad flooding events or anything that you remember as kind of like a standout moment?

Brown: Sandy, Sandy was the worst.

Grenagle: And were you in Crisfield during Sandy?

Brown: I was in Crisfield, but I didn't live here at that point because what, Sandy was 13 years ago? It's been a while now.

Grenagle: I think it was 2011 or 2012.

Brown: Yeah. Yeah, I was down here, but I didn't live here at that point, but that was bad. Of course, everybody was stuck then.

Grenagle: So could you kind of speak on, like, what do you remember seeing and like hearing from people that were...

Brown: They came in boats to get people out. Everybody was just scared. And a lot of houses that were flooded, they didn't get fixed. They just tore them down and everybody had to put a- a white towel on their door if you needed help, so, because it was- it was busy. But Crisfield has a big military truck, big old high truck, so they'll come through with that too. But usually, see they have all that stuff organized when they know it's going to be that bad. And hurricanes, we might get a lot of flood. The problem with Sandy was it came straight up the bay. When it comes straight up to the bay, everybody's going get flooded. If it don't go up the bay, we're all right. It's tide and wind and stuff, but, you know.

Knorr: Would you say after Sandy, did you see a lot of your friends or people that you knew kind of either talking about or actually relocating or going up maybe a little bit more north, like you said, maybe the outskirts?

Brown: A lot of people had to relocate for a while because they had to redo everything in certain spots. But the weird thing was, we live, where we lived across the little roadway, it's all in the same circle. Clarence's mother lives across there. Tide didn't come in their house. It's just weird, but it came into this side that we live on now. It came in there. And trees were knocked down and stuff. A lot people had to leave. They took them, some people stayed down here at the motel and a lot of them went to Princess Anne to the lodge across from Washington High School. They- they put up a lot people, FEMA put up lot of people there because everything had to be redone. It was, yeah, that was a mess.

Grenagle: How many people would you say returned after that?

Brown: Everybody.

Grenagle: Everybody?

Brown: Everybody came back because everybody loves where we're at, you know? I hated it when I first come here, I ain't gonna lie to you, I hated it. But when I got in the community and got active and everything, yeah, everybody stays.

Grenagle: Can I ask why you hated Crisfield when you first moved here?

Brown: Because I'm from Wenona, and it's always been a rivalry for years, like. If my parents caught me coming to Crisfield when I was a teenager, they'd beat the shit out of me. It was just always that rivalry there. And like when we had high school games, and both the high schools, the cops had to be there. And back in the 70s, late 70s, early 80s, you didn't see no cops at school. It just wasn't about that. But it was such a rivalry between them, Washington High and Crisfield. They always had to have the cops there and it went back years and years and years from a baseball game that my father was in at Deal Island when they had a high school down there. Well, they didn't like what happened, so the Deal Island boys blocked off the bridge and wouldn't let the Crisfield boys go across the bridge. It was a big old matter and that's where it started and nobody ever forgot it. So that's what happened.

Grenagle: Now, let's say after Sandy, did you find climate change or sea level rise being something that was a discussion amongst the community?

Brown: I've always believed in it. I'm a bleeding heart, liberal Democrat, just to let you know. But I've have always believed it. But it's hard to get these people around here to understand what that is. Like we, when we were growing up, we didn't get floods like this. Well, you know, you probably didn't. But you're getting them now. And like I said, we used to have all kinds of beaches here, and in Deal Island, and Wenona. Always a beach to go to, and there's one in each community now that- that people can actually go to. We always had a choice, you know. But I finally got my husband schooled on this kind of stuff, but a lot of them just don't believe it. I mean, they're just in this little world like everything's okay, and that drives me crazy sometimes. But you have to just kind of go along with it. Once, if someone brings it up, I'll talk to them about it, but 90% of the time they don't want to hear it. They're not thinking. It's like Smith Island. Every time a tide comes up now, it's all in the streets. It was never like that before. But if you say anything to them, about global warming, "Oh, I think no global warming. We don't believe in that." Well, what are y'all going to do? You're sinking, okay? Islands pop up and go away. They don't get that concept. I know there's been a lot of money spent over there, a lot. It's not gonna help, you know? I mean, they put some barriers up. I don't think that ain't gonna help. I mean it's, they're losing so much land, it's unbelievable. It's the same thing in Wenona, in Deal Island. I mean places that- that tide never came up is all over the road now. I got a sister still lives down there. But, yeah.

Grenagle: And you think it's because it threatens their like community and their culture and like history like to one be lost, at some point be lost.

Brown: The problem is they don't read, they don't inform themselves on things, you know. And it's- it's just, some days I wish I could be like that and not worry about nothing, but I worry about all this kind of stuff. Because you know, I got grandkids. What's going to be left for them? But like I said, everybody's like, la-di-da, it's okay. They don't educate themselves.

Knorr: Yeah, I was going to say, what do you think the biggest resistance to the issue, like when you talk to people, what would be the biggest issue? Is it just a lack of education?

Brown: It's a lack of education. Yeah, and there's information out there, but they don't want no part of it. Because they don't believe it. They don't want to believe it, so I don't know if it's threatening to them or they just think it's bullshit for some reason. I don't know.

Knorr: I know, speaking to a few interviewees and everything, a lot of times the issue of- of relocation is often tied in with kind of that climate change, I think. Would you say that people, when they hear that, may, might think of relocation where, like you said, everybody comes back because they were in Crisfield. Do you think maybe, have you ever experienced any tie between, when you talk about that, people just viewing it as like relocating out?

Brown: Yes, I. Most of the conversations that I've had, especially with, you know, people in the last couple of years, because they want to move the housing projects on the outside of Crisfield, and nobody wants to do that. But at the same time, FEMA can't keep coming down. I mean, everything has to be gutted and rebuilt again, you know. Floors have to be put back down. It's a lot of expense. And I can see why FEMA don't want to keep doing that, and I can understand why they need to move us further out, but they don't. They're going to fight it every step of the way. And most, I'm going to tell you a lot of reasons why that is. A lot of people down here don't have cars. And where we're at is walking distance to church, to our Dollar General, Family Dollar. It's walking distance. If they move us all the way out of town, it's- it's not.

Grenagle: Now, do you ever attend or participate in any community events that are, or like city hall meetings, that are focused on trying to remedy the flooding issues and- and what not?

Brown: I have been to a couple and, but the couple that I've been to have not talked about remedying the tide water. It was always about something else. But, hold on,

however, the housing authority has, they have meetings every couple of months, and I, and I have to them when they discuss the tide. And that's- they had a new director down there, his name was Don Bibb, and he was really pushing to get everything moved out of town. And it wasn't a pretty time in there, but it just wasn't. Because they don't get it, they don't get that this has to be done, you know. And I understand everybody loves being where they're at. I get that. But there's got to be another solution as far as transportation for people who can't drive or don't drive to get you to stores and stuff. Because the pharmacists around here will bring you your stuff, you know, they'll- they'll bring it to you, if you can't get out for any reason. But that's a big problem with people around here. Trying to convince them that this will be a good thing to move and not have to worry about all your stuff getting ruined every time the tide comes out. So what I think they're doing quietly, like I told you about when some people move out of certain spots, they don't refill it. I think they're doing that on purpose, quietly, and then that way they don't have such an uproar about it and everything. But you know, like I said, you can't keep- keep fixing this stuff. It's pretty sad.

Grenagle: When you see people are moving out, does the city do anything to like condemn those buildings so that people can't move back in or?

Brown: They're just not re-renting them.

Grenagle: Okay.

Brown: And there's no signs up or anything. I noticed a lot of houses that were condemned after Sandy, that it took a long time, but they got just about all them tore down now. But they were personal, I mean, you know, people own those houses, like they were real old houses, and again, they sit right on the ground. It's the same way down- down Wenona too. When they built houses, the old big houses, they sat right on ground, no crawl space, no nothing. They didn't worry about tide then. There weren't any, you know? So they didn't have to worry about it. But, we do now.

Knorr: You said that you go to some of the housing authority, like tide discussions and everything, or any of the other community events in Crisfield. Are there any projects that you've been particularly excited about, or that have been maybe overly concerning to you about what's been going on?

Brown: Not with the housing authority, but with the opioid crisis, because it was in this church. They give us all classes on how to save people and a couple summers ago, it was every day somebody was ODing and dying. I guess they had fentanyl in it, I don't know, but you know we all got together and learned how to use Narcan and stuff and we just kept on it. And the weird thing about this is there's a lot of people who call themselves Christians who said, "Just let them die. They want to die. They won't be

doing drugs if they don't want to die." Well, you know what? If somebody falls out in front of me, I'm going to save them, I always have it with me. There ain't too many families that have not been affected by that, and I had a nephew who died. And these people that are saying that, it ain't touched their family yet, because if it did you want to save your family, right? Sort of like that kind of bullshit makes me mad. But that we met and you know just looking out for things and helping people and actually, my God, I did have to use my Narcan one time and it was on my own niece. Oh my God, a couple summers ago she had hepatitis and she was a drug user, IV drug user, an alcoholic, all that. She needed a liver transplant, but there's only two hospitals in the whole United States that will give an alcoholic a liver transplant and she had this weird blood type. So anyway, she ended up getting her liver transplant and I was sitting there thinking sure to God, I was watching her die. She smelled like death. She was dying and I'm like sure to God she ain't gonna start this again when she comes home. I had confidence in her, you know. Well, she started drinking again. And she called me, I was real close to her, she lived with me when she was a teenager. I loved her to death, and I was trying to think of when I stopped hanging around her, and that was when she started using heroin and you know, it was out of my control. But she called and she was crying. She said, "Aunt Angie, can I please come down and stay?" and I'm like, "Yeah, come on," you know. She said, "Well, what are the rules?" I said, "I just want you to live. I want you be sober." Well, come to find out she got somebody to go to the liquor store for her. There was all these liquor bottles under the bed when she finally left. This guy dragged her home and knocked on my door, and if he hadn't done that, she'd have been dead. And I'm like, so I- I shot her up with the Narcan, and she's like, "Please don't tell my mom, please don't my mom." I said, "Sarah, I am not calling your mother to tell her her child's dead on my watch," because I lost a son in a car accident, not from drugs, but I know that pain, and I wasn't going to call my sister and tell her she was dead. So she got mad at me, but you know what, she's alive. And there's a lot of people in the community that keep up on the Narcan thing for that very reason. You can change your life any day you want to, you know. You can't if you're dead, but. There is community comes together with stuff like that. There's no judgment or condemning we're just going to save your damn life and hope that you appreciate it and get some help for yourself because it's not easy. I know it's not easy, but you can do it with encouragement. Okay, that's not got nothing do with the tide, does it?

Knorr: No, it's all good. It's all good.

Brown: Okay.

Grenagle: Absolutely. A question I kind of have, I guess, based off of that, if you mentioned that it was pretty bad with overdoses, so like there's likely to be a pretty bad

drug issue. Is it possibly from a lack of jobs like, that's been creating this, this unemployment that's led to like an abuse of drugs in the community?

Brown: You know, I- I don't really think that's a part of it for some reason. I think people just give up on themselves and they get depressed and they don't want to feel like that and they, they use it. And I'm telling you, the biggest problem why there was a heroin epidemic and there still is, but that doctor in Salisbury, Dr. Fox, the one that was giving everybody all the opiates. I don't know if you were around. Oh my God. He- he had everybody on fentanyl patches, opiates, and there wasn't nothing wrong with these people, you know what I mean? He was just giving it to them as long as you paid him. And it was a big problem. Not only down here, but all of Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset County too. And they locked him up for that. And then you had all this influx of people who were detoxing, they couldn't get their percs or whatever they were getting they couldn't get that anymore. So they went to heroin because they couldn't deal with the getting through it, you know. And that's- that happened, that's happened about 13, 14 years ago now. You have to look into it. I'm sure you can find information about it.

Knorr: You- you said that the project, that like kind of the Narcan and the awareness campaign, I guess was that done through the church or was that kind of a city project?

Brown: It was done through the Somerset County Health Department and you know, this church is really good about having community events here, especially if it's going to help people, so they do that a lot, but that was through the Health Department.

Knorr: So, so would you say that either a city or a local or state government kind of does a good job of like listening to the voices of the people and then kind of responding to that? Like they do a good job of?

Brown: Yes, now that we have a mayor. She's a woman, and she's awesome.

Grenagle: Can you speak on to how awesome she is. We've heard this a lot.

Brown: Oh, have you heard it a lot?

Grenagle: Yeah, we don't get a lot of examples.

Brown: She's down to earth. She's always had, if you got a concern you go talk to her about, she got time to listen to you. And she's trying really hard to get a whole bunch of different things, like revitalize downtown and stuff like that, and she's gonna get it done, I'm telling you, she'll get it done. But she's- she goes to this church actually, but she- she's just a nice woman.

Knorr: A few of the projects that we've heard, like she's got the youth campaign that she started up, the- you said the development of downtown-

Brown: Yup.

Knorr: -the three businesses. Are those projects that you see as positive to kind of helping revitalize Crisfield in a way?

Brown: Yes, I do. Have you ever been to Princess Anne? Yeah, have you been downtown where they revitalize all that and there's all kinds of little stores open and all that? It's awesome. That was, Princess Anne used to be to hang out for a bite, I guess, like especially from Wenona, but we had everything there. And then everything left. And now it's like, it's beautiful down there. You know, they're getting it together and everything. And I want that to happen in Crisfield, too.

Grenagle: Yeah, I just had an interview at Washington High School with a gentleman, Andre Collins, who's pretty significant in like the community and so I was driving through Princess Anne, that downtown street, and it was, I was caught off guard. I didn't realize how- how beautiful it actually it was.

Brown: It is. Yeah, it was awesome when I was growing up, and it's getting back to that too. Because there was all kinds of stores and pizza places, and there was a movie theater there once. And there was two movie theaters down here at one time. I don't know why, I don't know why they stopped that kind of stuff, but it's coming back.

Knorr: So kind of speaking on like recreational things like movie theaters and everything, do you think like the waterfront and the Bay has played a part in the recreation here in Crisfield at least?

Brown: Oh yeah, because people come here, like, in summertime and everything. I wasn't happy when they built the condos because it changed the whole downtown area, especially when you're going down and one's on the left-hand side. There used to be all kinds of cool stuff there.

Knorr: Do you think that any of the, do you think like the storming and the more recent floods has kind of impacted some of that stuff or like the businesses and the condos?

Brown: Yeah, probably a little bit. Because there was a couple things that were getting ready to open up downtown and it got flooded and they just gave up on it, I guess, because they didn't want to keep dealing with that. It was going to be a- it was going to be called Downtown Sneaks. It was a guy going to have a tennis shoe shop and everything and he just didn't open it. I don't blame him, I mean, if you put all your heart and something like that and the tide comes and you, it's all ruined, that'd be hard.

Grenagle: What do you- what do you see as being important for Crisfield coming back to being, like we've heard countless times it used, it was a booming town even 25 years ago, what- what would you say are the steps necessary to- to getting back to that booming town?

Brown: Infrastructure because it's old and it's failing and it's like a street will be blocked off or all this time because a pipe busted and yeah, I mean you can't get things down here like, they were talking about getting a convention center and restaurant on Jersey Island, which is beautiful down there, but the infrastructure is not going to hold that, you know. So they got to do that first. They get that done, then you can talk about moving other stuff in. Because they can build them up high and stuff like that, but not infrastructure won't handle it, it's- God knows how that is. It's always busting.

Grenagle: What do you have? So infrastructure-wise, do you see like your water quality and like your sewage output? Like are those complicated? I mean you were saying that pipes bust regularly.

Brown: They are. Yeah, yeah. It- it can, it's real complicated sometimes. And when the tide comes up, you can't flush your toilet. It's just a whole thing.

Grenagle: And what about electricity? Does that, does that, is that problematic?

Brown: It flicks off and on, but I don't know if that has anything to do with the tide or not, I'm not sure. But it does that every now and again. Cable, that's, yeah. That goes out all the time.

Knorr: Have you or anyone you know had to make like major repairs to your home or any of your friends or even minor things from the flooding that you've had to like kind of fix on your- your own?

Brown: Well, we just call them, I mean, you know, because I'm living at the housing authority. They have to fix everything, but you know they're, as far as the pipes backing up, oh God, bathroom blew up one time, we had to deal with that, but I mean the housing authority come and fixed it, but it was all because of the infrastructure, you know, and they keep sending letters, don't flush wipes, things like that, and we tried. But a lot of the reason why it gets clogged up over there too is, you won't believe what they find when like the cops come and people are trying to flush needles and all that kind of stuff. But you know what, that's getting a lot better though. I don't see as many people out for drugs, you know. Because if you're in my neighborhood and you don't live there, you're probably looking for drugs. Which sometimes that gets crazy, but that's calmed down a lot.

Knorr: So mainly the, like when you've had a call, it's just mainly been for like those pipes backing up and yeah?

Brown: Yeah, and for some reason, well, we had to do that again recently. The kitchen wouldn't go down, so they had to come put in all new pipes and flush them out and all that stuff. Supposedly, they have gotten a grant for the infrastructure, but I haven't seen them doing anything yet. I know we have a pumping station right on Cove Street. Good Lord, that's a mess when that goes. They're supposed to be building a new one because it was closed for like, I don't know, two or three months because you can't get down there, but they're supposed be rebuilding that.

Grenagle: Let's talk about like the youth in Crisfield, the current youth that's- that's here now. Do you expect them to stay?

Brown: Most of them.

Grenagle: And why is that?

Brown: Because it's home to people, you know what I mean? My husband, he ain't never lived nowhere but here his whole entire life. I've been all over the place, Texas, all kinds of places. But- but you always want to come home. And it's his way of life, you know, that's all he knows, that's all a lot of them know. And as far as the youth, they redid over on the family side. They put in new basketball hoops and tennis courts and a nice playground and a lot of kids are going and it's really, I'm happy to see that because most kids now [inaudible], you know, playing games and stuff, but it was so nice to see them out there getting exercise and playing like we used to play, you know, and it's- it's really nice. They fix it up really nice, because it has sat for years without nets and all cracking up and stuff so nobody use it, but that's nice to see, so that's a big thing.

Knorr: Do you see a lot of, oftentimes, more people coming in to Crisfield have been older or for retirement, like they've been moving to Crisfield? Do you see that if they keep continuing fixing things up, that there's more of an influx of like younger people moving to Crisfield? Can you see that, or?

Brown: Possibly, I guess, but like the condos, everybody, some rich people, and I don't know where to get the money in Crisfield, but it's old money, have condos down there, but they're all like city people that come, that have bought the- the condos, and, I don't know. If there was, this is a scary time, it really is, because you know, Pittsburgh Paint up there, they call it something else, I forget what it is, but that's probably going to have to lay everybody off there, because products, they put paint brushes together, it comes from China, shit's getting ready to hit the fans.

Grenagle: We're talking about Rubberset, Sherwin-Williams.

Brown: Rubberset, yes.

Grenagle: Okay.

Brown: Yup.

Grenagle: And that seems to be like one of the last remaining-

Brown: Big.

Grenagle: -factory job or industry jobs here, so-

Brown: Yup.

Grenagle: -that could be like a- a really crippling to the economy.

Brown: Yes, it will and it's gonna happen. I do believe. So you boys need to hunker down, get stocked up for bad days.

Knorr: Kind of speaking on the, I guess, economy, in the years that you've lived here, have you noticed, like, a big change in your time here, or- or even from when you were, you've always been around the area. Have you seen like that big change in economy, maybe in the seafood industry or in like some of the manufacturing stuff around here?

Brown: Well, there used to be a lot of manufacturing. It used to be Mrs. Paul's Kitchen. And there was something else my husband could tell you, because I wouldn't hear that. But there were restaurants everywhere, and people would come from out of town to go to restaurants because they were damn good. Of course, the seafood business has always done good down here. But sometimes they have a little shop open up and nobody goes. I don't know why, they don't have money or whatever, and they don't stay long. But the biggest one is Rubberset, if that, if they get laid off in there, it's gonna- a lot of people in this community is gonna hurt. And there's nothing we can do about it.

Grenagle: So one of the interviewees that I've spoken to kind of brought up an issue with Crisfield is that it's such a small community as far as the amount of people, but yet it's so divided. Could you speak or would you have anything to say about that? Like whether like racially or politically that keeps Crisfield from unifying and possibly...

Brown: Some things are racial. A lot of it is. When I first came down here, I was like, I've seen a lot of mixed couples. I'm like, "Oh, this this is pretty good, you know, people are cool down here," and when I actually got here, there is, there is some problems with that. I ain't going to lie to you. It's like, last night we were trying to sleep and there's a

guy that lives in the end of the building. I don't even know why he's there. Him and his girlfriend, when they first moved in, they were fine. Now they fight all the time, and he's out there two o'clock in the morning screaming, "Where's my fucking wife at!" you know, because they're doing drugs and he just wants to holler the n-word all the time and then still thinks that, hey, thinks it will be his friends. No, you're done. Hey, Bo.

[Bo Ward arrives, side conversation begins 00:35:40]

Bo Ward (Ward): Hello, everything okay?

Grenagle: Hi Bo, how you doing?

Ward: I'm Bo, I'm the contact guy.

Grenagle: Yeah, I am Joseph. Nice to meet you.

Ward: Joseph.

Grenagle: Yes sir.

Ward: Okay.

Knorr: Chris.

Ward: Chris?

Knorr: Yeah, nice to meet you, sir.

Ward: Same, okay.

Ward: So if y'all need anything just let me know.

Grenagle: Absolutely. Thank you.

[Side conversation ends, 00:35:54]

Brown: That's my brother-in-law.

Grenagle: Excellent.

Brown: He's cool. The whole family is, actually.

Grenagle: And so how big is that family, like I feel like we've had a lot of Wards.

Brown: Oh yeah, there's a lot of them. Yeah, there's a lot of them.

Grenagle: And so, kind of like stemming off like, we've heard tight-knit community being used a lot. Is it because it's so rich in family that?

Brown: Yeah, probably, like the family, you know, my husband, brother-in-law they're a large family and whatever, if something goes wrong they are right there and if something goes wrong for them we're right there to help them, you know, but yeah. There's black Wards and white Wards. The only thing I figure out about that is back in slave time, slaves took on the last name of their owners most of the time. That's how you get that kind of different- they're all Wards, you know, but it's like when I, when I was growing up down home Webster is a big name down there, and if one Webster married another Webster, they would always say, "Oh it's a different set." No, the hell it ain't, honey. You're all related. What the hell are you talking about? Who told y'all it was a different set? No, it's not the same. So they didn't have to change their last name. How cool is that?

Knorr: Do you think maybe some of like the divide is what leads to people, or what would be your opinion on a lot of times people have an opinion for this and people think, like there's an argument of like maybe more development and then people are like well without the, you know, you could put a new business in but nobody's going to go so there's no point. Do you think maybe some that divide is why there hasn't been one single solution to some of these complex problems in Crisfield?

Brown: Probably. Yeah, probably.

Knorr: Would you say people?

Brown: A lot of people just don't want change, to be honest with you. Especially the older generations, they don't like change. They don't want anything to change. And for racist white people down here, they don't want to see black people get ahead in anything. It's just the truth, you know? Just the truth. It's like, you know, "You're there, you down there, you stay there, and we're going to make a million dollars." [pauses]

Grenagle: I guess, let's kind of pivot, I guess, like maybe the future of Crisfield. Would you ever suggest Crisfield as a place to live for somebody who might just be looking for new scenery or?

Brown: I would. Yeah, I would. Absolutely.

Knorr: What would be your selling point for someone to come down to Crisfield? If they like ask you, why should I come to Crisfield? What kind are they?

Brown: So I can hang out with you. Because it's convenient. It is convenient. Oh god, I used to go everywhere. Driving never bother me. Go here, go there. I hate leaving

Crisfield now. Because I just want to come back home. Because we don't have to leave town. We can go to the grocery store, you know. Everything is here. Well, we've got Family Dollar and Dollar General, but that's good enough for me. But when I go, I want to come home like, I- it's probably got something to do with age too, you know. I've done been all over the country, and I'm done. But all my kids don't live here. They live, every one of my kids has moved to Delaware for some reason.

Knorr: Did you ever raise any children in Crisfield, or were you?

Brown: No, no. When I come down here, my kids are already grown. My daughter will come and live with me for a little while. My oldest daughter. But she had a job in Salisbury and to go to Salisbury every day from here, that's a long haul. I just think in the day I'd have done it too, but not no more.

Grenagle: And what was her opinion on living in Crisfield with you?

Brown: She- she thought it wasn't anything to do here, because she was used to living in Salisbury where you can jump here, jump there, go here, you know, movie theaters, all that kind of stuff. She really didn't like it, but the rent was cheap, you know, because she ended up going on the family side for a while. And yeah, she left.

Knorr: Are you hopeful for the future of Crisfield?

Brown: I am. I am. I think once we get everything straight, I don't even want to go there because I get all upset by this political bullshit but anyway, once we got that straight, I think. This is just my personal opinion. We're going to go through some real fucking hard times that we ain't never seen before but when that shit's over, everybody's going to come together, black, white, all colors. We're all going to come together because this country's always been good, always. It's always been great. So, when all that shit's over, all that bullshit's over with, I can see people coming together, because, like, the protests every weekend are unbelievable to me. And I love protests. I do. But I'm too old for it now, you know what I mean? I have to go to the bathroom every two minutes and, oh my God, I guess I'm going to put my pants on and go protest. I don't think I can do it anymore. So young people have got to do it, because I've done it my whole life. So it's time for everybody to rise up. We just all need to come together. It's been so divided for the last 10 years. It's unbelievable, unbelievable.

Grenagle: And that kind of brings up an interesting question the- the young people have to do it. What do you feel the young people have to or can do for Crisfield?

Brown: I don't know, play a bigger part, come up with some good ideas of what to do. Work with the mayor, work with the housing authority, which you know, they work,

everybody works together with them pretty much anyway now. But they, we gotta give them something to look forward to. Like, okay, we can do this in five years or whatever, because you know, business ain't gonna just come here. I mean, it takes a while for all that to get up and running and everything, but I believe we can get another business down here. Carvel Hall. A lot of people have wanted to buy Carvel Hall, and for some reason everything they wanted to put there, people didn't agree with, because, you know, they were going to do hydroponic weed. Honey, I'm right up on that. I'm going to get me a job, I can do that. I grow stuff all the time, but they pro- they don't want it, because it was- it was for medical marijuana, but they didn't want it. So, I mean, that got beat down. I really thought that was going to come, but it didn't. And that would have been a lot of jobs. And it wasn't the young people that didn't want it, it was the older generation who thinks even medicinal marijuana is just as bad as heroin. And their mind, that's their mindset. It's a drug, it's a drug, you're all going to die. It's pot, for God's sake. It helps with a lot of things, but you can't talk old people into that.

Grenagle: And that would generate tax revenue.

Brown: Yes.

Grenagle: And something that we've come across is that a lot of more out of city limit residents have been incorporated with services like drinking water and sewage. But yet, because they're not in the city limits, they're not paying the taxes involved with that, which has been demanding on the infrastructure, but also has been demanding on city residents because their- their money's not going as far.

Brown: Yeah. Yeah. But hopefully something will come like that. Because there was a couple things here that- that, you know, sustained everybody down every years. Rubberset, I'm worried about right now, but I think once we get over this bullshit, I think everything will come back okay. I think so. Because the whole point is to bring people jobs here and not take them away, you know. Gotta do that.

Knorr: Would you say like that divide that you've kind of spoken on or the resistance to change is sort of also kind of part of the issue? Like you said, there was going to be a new factory there or whatever that was going to be built and then people like vetoed it down a little bit. Do you think that kind of is hard when there are opportunities because people can't necessarily agree it's been hard for those opportunities to kind of see fruition a little bit?

Brown: Yeah, yeah. And I don't know why they didn't jump on that. That would have been an awesome job for everybody to have. But yeah, you gotta break that up some kind of way. Because it- it, people get in a certain mindset, just like I was saying. They think marijuana is as bad as heroin, and we all know that it is not. But they get in that

mindset, and you can't talk them out of that, you know. You just, you can't. I don't know. It's weird.

Grenagle: I'm going to go with the last question.

Knorr: Yeah, go ahead.

Grenagle: So, Angela, what, like, wisdom would you have to share with the future generations of Crisfield?

Brown: Stick together to bring things here, because everybody wants to stay here, but everybody's got to have a job. You all got to stick together and get the- get the jobs in here. And I- I believe they can do that. And who knows? Five years from now, all the people who didn't want the pot plant might be dead, so we- we might be able to get it then.

Knorr: And so this will be stored in the NABB Center in Salisbury. So is there anything that we didn't touch on that you would like to say for the record about the city of Crisfield or any last?

Brown: Yes, I got hope for the city of Crisfield, I do. I think everything's going to come together eventually, especially now that we have the mayor who's willing to work with everybody. I think we'll be getting a lot of stuff done. She's amazing, I love her, so that's all I got to say.

Knorr: All right, thank you so much.

Brown: Oh, you're welcome, thank you.

[Transcript ends]